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need to be tested in reality and adjusted in the light of experience. Both those who mandate policy and those who implement policy need to recognize that the possibility exists for any policy to be counterproductive, with the unintended and undesired results outweighing the desired results.

Educational gerontologists have a special responsibility to the public to provide legislators with hard data on the consequences of any change in the social security legislation. At the moment, the choices available to Congress appear to be limited—they can (a) increase the social security tax, (b) begin to use other revenues to subsidize the program (c) decrease benefits, or (d) cut certain groups from their rolls. A strong case can be built for each of these options. The problem is that one can not separate the social, the political, or the economic consequences of opting for one alternative over the other. Which option do you favor and why? That is the question.

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INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUES: A TESTED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

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Children's attitudes about growing old and about the elderly themselves are in large part influenced by negative images projected by the media and through lack of actual experience in interacting with older people. To counter this situation and to provide an opportunity for positive attitude shift, an educational program has been developed for 10- and 11-year-old students. Growing Up—Growing Older is a developed unit of instruction relying on a package of software including films and printed support materials. A strong experiential component is provided through structured intergenerational dialogues, facilitated by visiting older volunteers.

The program was field tested using both a treatment and control population. Survey methodology was used to determine pre- and post-experience stages of attitude awareness and understanding of the elderly. Although the study population did not demonstrate the level of negative attitude we had anticipated from the literature, post-experience testing indicated a positive shift. More significant is the demonstrated increase in level of awareness of aging issues and of older persons as a result of the educational experience. Finally, the treatment population increased significantly the percentage of old people they interacted with outside the classroom. This increased familiarity and awareness of the elderly can be expected to continue to produce attitudes based more on fact than on fancy.

The growing concern about children's attitudes toward older persons goes beyond their acceptance of the negative stereotypes and myths that abound in our society. Questions have been raised about the influence of such beliefs on the child's developing self-image and the effect of such conditioning on productive intergenerational relationships (Pribble & Trusty, 1981; Brittin & Brittin, 1969; Hickey & Kalish, 1968). In another perspective, the middle-generation children's attitudes of responsibility for the care of aging parents is seen to be strongly influenced by prevalent adverse social value systems (Seefeldt, 1977; Jacobs, 1975).

Age-segregated housing, dispersed family, and other social conditions tend to isolate today's children from the realities of growing

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old. This alienation is reinforced by our educational system, as evidenced in the limited curricula on aging (Russell, 1979; Myers, 1981). Often parents and teachers, themselves misinformed about the aging process, inadvertently reinforce negative attitudes toward older persons. Finally, the educational system places an emphasis on peer relations, further supporting the negative images about aging (or worse, the absence of any images at all) available to children.

The responsibility of the educational system as an institution with a crucial role in transmitting the values and ethics that shape children's attitudes and behaviors cannot be underestimated. In recent years a number of investigations have been made to determine the nature of educational programs about aging in the curricula of school systems (Weinberger, 1979; Myers, 1981).

THE PROBLEM

The fact is that "the vast majority of mankind look upon the coming of old age with sorrow or rebellion. It fills them with more aversion than death itself" (de Beauvoir, 1973). These attitudes were identified as present in 90% of a sample of 180 elementary school children making the need to intervene to change these attitudes urgent. The children, drawn from a variety of racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, are quoted as saying they would feel "awful if they were old." They expressed denial: "Oh, no, not me; I'm not getting old," and "I won't grow old; it's too terrible" (Seefeldt, Jantz, Galper, & Serock, 1977b).

Our society demonstrates attitudes toward the old that are deeply ambivalent. If we are to change society's attitudes, we must exert influence on children at the point of the life cycle where attitudes and behaviors have not yet crystallized and at an age when young people are, as Anshin (1978) identifies, developmentally and maturationally ready to understand age differentiations.

The task assumes an urgency when we become aware that the age distribution of our population forecasts an ever increasing ratio of older to younger people over time. How will the children of today and tomorrow view their own future given their negative view of old age? And how will they manage interpersonal relationships with the elderly with whom they will inevitably come into contact?

Research on children's attitudes toward older persons reveals that negative stereotypical views are relatively common (Seefeldt, Jantz, Galper, & Serock, 1977a, 1977b; Hickey & Kalish, 1968).

It has been suggested that children rely on stereotypes in their perceptions of aging because they have very few contacts with older persons. Mobility has meant that children have fewer opportunities to interact with aged family members. In addition, many grandparents are relatively young—in their 60s, 50s, or even 40s, so grandchildren do not perceive them as "elderly." Furthermore, because of the proliferation of age-segregated communities, children have limited exposure to older persons outside their families. Children deprived of experiences with a diversity of older persons in a different setting may never learn to question the stereotypes they hold about aging.

When television becomes the primary source of contact with older persons, as is the situation for many children, negative attitudes toward aging are further reinforced (Davis, 1980; Pribble & Trusty, 1981). Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, & Morgan, 1980) concluded that: "The main results are clear and consistent. The more people, and especially young people, watch television, the more they tend to perceive old people in generally negative and unfavorable terms." (p. 21)

How are older persons depicted in the media? It is significant that older persons are under-represented on television shows, appearing in only 4% of prime-time television fictional programming (Pepper, 1978). When older people are portrayed, it is done in a stereotypical manner. They are more likely to be shown as villains; they are rarely depicted as competent problem-solvers; and they are often dramatized one-dimensionally or satirically (Kubey, 1980). These findings are corroborated by a recent study of prime-time and weekend daytime network television dramatic programming. The researchers (Gerbner et al., 1980), having conducted a content analysis of these programs, concluded that the image of aging was essentially a gloomy one that rendered old people as practically invisible. The elderly have fared no better in motion pictures nor in print such as advertising (Kubey, 1980).

The situation in television programming does not differ for children's programs. Researchers, studying a sample of shows viewed by children, found that not only were older women, children, and minority groups under-represented, but out of 85 half-hour segments there were only four interactions between children and elderly. They concluded that children are not currently being provided with realistic and accurate portrayals of the elderly on television (Jantz, Seefeldt, Galper, & Serock, 1977b). Since television

is a primary source of information for most people, this information is disturbing.

The problem is further compounded by the fact that children's educational experiences do not provide opportunities for learning about aging. Very few people over the age of 65 are on the staffs of public schools. Thus children are not afforded the chance to interact with older people during the course of their education. In addition, children's textbooks do not provide accurate portrayals of older persons (Peterson & Eden, 1977; Ansello, 1978; Kingston & Drotter, 1981). By way of illustration, Robin (1977), in a study of elementary school textbooks published from 1953 to 1968, found that older characters were under-represented and depicted as neutral or bland.

However, content on aging is not beginning to be included, albeit slowly, in school curricula.¹ What impedes these efforts is the unavailability of appropriate resource materials. For example, one study of public schools in Ohio revealed that 70% of secondary schools had included aging content in their curricula, while only 27% of the elementary schools had reported progress in this area. What is significant is the explanations given by the 204 principals or directors of curriculum who participated in this study. They stated that there are inadequate resources and materials to teach the subject, that aging is a nontraditional topic, and that they were unprepared to include such content, having limited knowledge of the process of aging or the problems facing older people (Russell, 1979). Another study conducted in public schools in Dallas, Oregon, found that children's attitudes toward the elderly changed in a positive direction as a result of planned instruction. The researcher recommended, as a result of the project's experiences, that "appropriate instructional units need to be developed, either by public support or privately for profit. Materials in this field are extremely limited in availability and are not generally useful at the elementary or secondary school level" (Speulda, 1973, p. 19).

To address the needs in this area of education, a curriculum package that combines a planned program of audiovisuals with actual dialogues with older people has been developed and field-tested in order to sensitize students in the 10- to 11-year-old age bracket to issues in aging.² General goals of the project have been:

¹ Especially interesting are the programs developed by Glass & Trent (1979); Rashkis (1976); Saxe (1977); Pratt (1977); and the California State Department of Education (1978).

² This package, titled "Growing Up—Growing Older," was funded by the Sears-Roebuck Foundation. Distributed at no cost to elementary schools across the country, it is facilitated through local chapters of the National Retired Teachers Association/American Association of Retired Persons working in collaboration with local grammar schools.

1. To increase communication and understanding among generations;
2. To increase children's awareness of aging as a normal process that is not to be feared, but rather planned for and welcomed;
3. To encourage children to develop more positive attitudes toward older people in general and toward their own aging in particular;
4. To foster more positive attitudes toward youth among older people.

THE INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUES PROGRAM

With the above goals in mind, educational materials and a volunteer training program have been developed. When integrated, these components provide the complete Intergenerational Dialogue Program and foster increased awareness between the generations, as can be seen in the following brief descriptions.

The Film Series

Film was chosen as the medium for sensitizing communication. Because children are already conditioned to receive information in an audiovisual mode, this technique was thought appropriate to counter images already received through television programming.

The series "Growing Up—Growing Older" introduces in the first film (as a plot device) three children who are about age 11 in the early 1920s. The second film focuses on the little girl Anna, now a grandmother, and her granddaughter as they cope with the middle generation; their experiences together provide mutual understanding and growth. The third film shows the two boys, now men in their 60s and 70s, as they learn how to make life more rewarding and how to contribute to the lives of younger people.

The series has been planned to grow in progressive stages. It moves from an initial stage of (1) arousing curiosity and developing a "common ground" between the generations, to (2) a stage of exploring the experience of old age, and on to (3) a final stage of personal identification with the process of aging. Each film was designed to address specified learning objectives and to address general and specific points about aging.

The Discussion Guide

A comprehensive guide or manual accompanies the films to allow the film user to understand the scope of the whole program. The discussion guide evolved after consultations with experts in primary

education, leaders in older volunteer groups, and gerontologists.

The discussion guide provides accurate background information about the aging process to enable both the leaders and the children to develop realistic impressions or levels of awareness about older persons. It enables teachers and group leaders to involve older persons successfully as role models. The guide helps to direct the dialogues and to provide an opportunity for the children to question freely an older person about experiences and feelings. Finally, it provides suggested supplemental activities that enable children to develop increased awareness about growing older through reinforcement experiences. Special attention has been given to guidelines for the older resource person.

THE FIELD TEST

To confirm the program's effectiveness, a field test was essential. The field test utilized a model program in a real-life setting. While field projects do not have the advantages of laboratory experiments where greater control of the variables can be exercised, it is understood that compromise will be called for and findings will be in part conditional, reflecting unique circumstances. Nevertheless, field survey work has an appreciated validity because it occurs in real-life settings. The experience may be more difficult to quantify with meaning in the sense of statistical significance, but it does allow for firsthand observation of an educational process, observation which is subject to meaningful interpretation.

The Research Design

The field research, simple in design, reflected the purpose of the model project: to determine whether the program could effectively raise the awareness of young people about aging and about old people. Three elementary schools in Los Angeles County were chosen as sites. Four fifth-grade classes were chosen as treatment subjects, and one fifth-grade class served as a control group (the control group experienced the survey, but not the film/tape dialogue activity).

Data Collection

Several questions called for investigation, most of them related to program refinement. Reported here is the result of the audience impact study. Here we were concerned with two questions:

1. What is the nature of and the level of awareness about the elderly held by the subject population both before and after the educational experience?
2. What is the meaning of the experience for the children?

PROCEDURES

Children's Attitudes Toward the Elderly (CATE) was developed by Richard K. Jantz and Carol Seefeldt (Jantz & Seefeldt, 1976) at the University of Maryland. We chose to use our own modified version of one of the CATE tests rather than replicate the original; we adapted the CATE semantic differential test.

The Semantic Issue

We were forced to deal early with the semantics surrounding "awareness" and "attitude." Which were we measuring? We became most comfortable with the word "awareness," because it seemed to us that the CATE was not actually measuring attitude change. This lack of conviction was reinforced as our own survey process was analyzed.

A brief theoretical note may be in order here. "Attitude" is a behavior that is both covert and overt. To measure attitude, we rely on overt methodologies. Most often these are opinion surveys. We know that stated opinion does not always reflect belief but is most likely to reflect social value systems individuals avidly adhere to rather than suffer the ego damage of rejection. So if you ask simple opinion questions like, "Are old people nice or not nice?" chances are great that the response may reflect social values rather than personal belief.

Attitudes at age ten are not always set but can be reflected in levels of awareness. A guided increase in levels of awareness allows for the development of more stereotype-free attitudes.

The Semantic Differential

The full CATE assessment battery includes a number of survey and testing devices. This is appropriate, because it attempts to examine attitudes of children ranging in age from three to eleven. We, however, were concerned only with ages ten and eleven, so we chose to adapt for our survey only one of the CATE instruments, the "semantic differential."

The CATE instrument uses ten pairs of opposing descriptive

words. The test assesses evaluative dimensions of descriptive words that fall into cognitive, behavioral, and affective components of behavior. This reveals what the child knows about old people, what he or she feels about them, and by implication, how he or she may act toward them.

As a check for age discrimination, in using both the original CATE procedure and our modified one, we administered the same semantic differential survey about young people. In our modification of this semantic differential tool we added five more pairs of words and deleted one pair the CATE had used. In addition, we found that it was important to sort the words in a different order so as not to "telegraph" expected answers; this we had learned through numerous pretests. The attitude survey was also given added column designations. The pair deleted from the original CATE instrument was "terrible/wonderful." We added "wise/foolish," "active/inactive," "disrespectful/respect others," "interesting/boring," and "fast/slow."

We devised another awareness instrument which we called the Awareness Survey. This tool consists of twenty true-false statements about old people drawn from the content of the three films.

As a third measure, we asked respondents to indicate how many old people they had seen and how many they had talked with in the "last week." Our reasoning was that this is a good measure of the visibility of old people to the young. Also, we were interested in knowing if the films and intergenerational dialogues would stimulate increased interaction between children and elderly outside of the classroom setting, and thus produce increased awareness upon which realistic attitudes could be built or formed.

Survey Procedures

All surveys were given to the subject population both as pre- and post-experience assessments. A classic measure of change in a communications experiment is (1) to test the population's level of awareness (or knowledge, or attitude), (2) to subject the population to a new experience of persuasive communication, and (3) to test the population to determine if any change at all occurred. Of course, measurement is made along several variables.

Assessments were administered one week before the film/dialogue activity in all of the settings. The identical instruments were administered one week after the three-week classroom experience. The entire measuring process consumed five weeks, a short enough period to avoid "maturation effects" of the test results.

In addition to the subject population, a control group was given the same surveys but did not experience the films or intergenera-

tional dialogues. In this way we were able to compare the test population with one similar in all respects except for having the program experience.

All of the post-test data are based on a sample of $N = 98$. The pretest sample size was $N = 126$. This decrease of 28 subjects represents an attrition rate of 22.2%. The attrition was distributed across all five of the classes and included children of both genders. The three primary causes of attrition were (1) absence due to illness, (2) parents' refusal to grant permission for child's participation, and (3) actual departure of child from school.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Analysis of the post-test semantic differential data and comparison to the pretest data reveals that on an overall basis and on the behavioral dimension, the treatment group was slightly more positive about old people at the pretest than was the control group. On the cognitive and affective dimensions, the control group was slightly more positive about old people at the pretest than was the treatment group, while at the post-test the treatment group was slightly more positive about old people than was the control group.

Overall on the semantic differential, the control group became more positive about old people from pretest to post-test on only four variables: active, rich, friendly and interesting; while the treatment group became slightly more positive from pretest to post-test, on six variables: (1) active, (2) rich, (3) good, (4) right, (5) happy, and (6) helpful.

Analysis of the data for each of the 20 items of the true-false Awareness Survey, shown in Fig. 1, indicate that the treatment group had increased awareness of aging and age-related issues on the post-test for 18 of the 20 variables, while the control group had increased awareness on the post-test for only 13 of the 20 variables.

To inspect the amount of contact the children had with elderly people, we used a measure that consisted of two fixed-response questions code-named *N-SEEN* (How many old people have you seen in the last week?) and *N-TALKED* (How many old people have you talked with in the last week?). The control group talked with fewer elderly people during the week prior to the post-test than they did during the week prior to the pretest, whereas the treatment group talked to more elderly people during the week prior to the post-test than they did during the week prior to the pre-test. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference

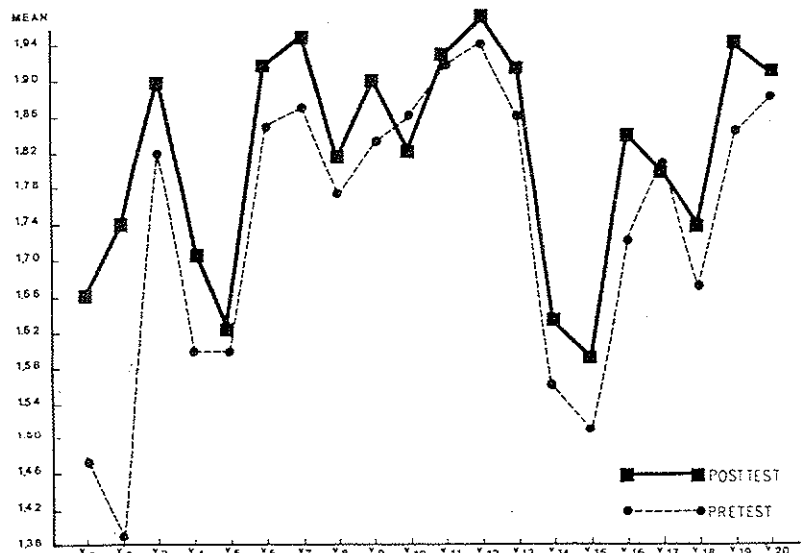


FIGURE 1 Mean Pretest and Post-test True-False Awareness Survey Scores by Individual Item

between the control and treatment groups on their post-test responses to *N-TALKED* ($p = 0.004$; $\eta = 0.2896$). These responses indicate that the control group talked to 1.08% fewer elderly people during the week before the post-test as compared to the week before the pretest. However, the treatment group talked to 7.27% more elderly people during the week prior to the post-test as compared to the week prior to the pretest. These data for the control classroom and the four treatment classrooms are presented graphically in Fig. 2.

DISCUSSION

The results of the two fixed-response variables, *N-SEEN* and *N-TALKED*, are the most important of our findings. The goals of this project were to increase awareness about the aged and age-related issues and to eliminate stereotypical attitudes toward the aged, replacing them with attitudes based on knowledge and fact. Only through increased interaction with the elderly will these goals be attained. Those children experiencing the treatment (i.e., the three "trigger" films and the three intergenerational dialogues)

became sufficiently comfortable, familiar, and curious about the elderly to increase significantly the percentage of old people they spoke with and interacted with outside of the classroom. The effects of this increased interaction can be seen in the responses to the Awareness Survey and the semantic differential about old people.

The reported increases in mean score for the treatment group on 18 of the 20 true-false variables on the Awareness Survey are a product not only of the "Growing Up—Growing Older" film series and the intergenerational dialogues in the classroom, but also of the increased contact with elderly outside of the classroom. It is through such out-of-classroom contacts with many different elderly people that children can build an awareness of the elderly as individuals and become more aware of both the commonalities and the differences between children and the elderly.

The effects of the children's increased interaction with older

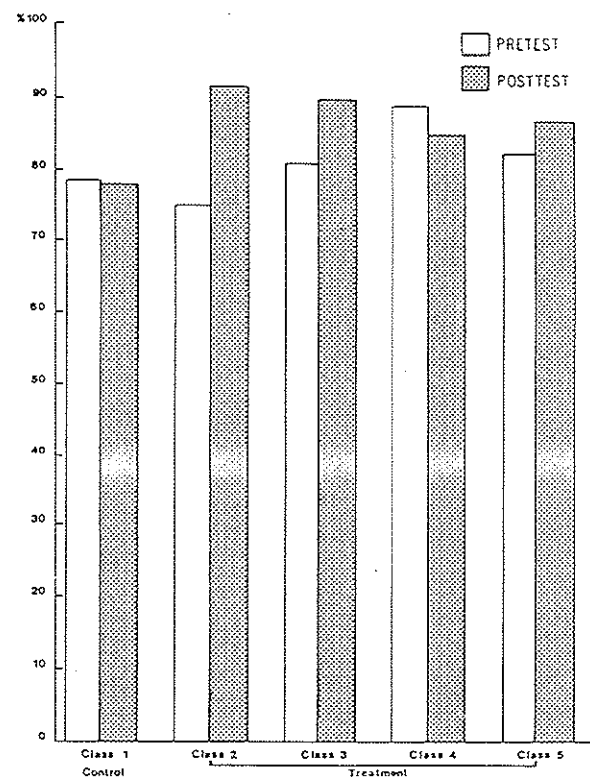


FIGURE 2 Means of *N-TALKED* By Individual Classrooms

people can also be seen in the results of the semantic differential survey. Earlier, reference had been made to whether this survey measured attitude or awareness. Using this instrument, a measured increase in positive attitudes would almost demand that said attitudes were stereotypical in nature. However, if the increased contacts by the children with the elderly discussants led to increased familiarity and awareness of the elderly in general, then one could expect this familiarity and awareness to produce attitudes based more on fact than fancy.

This is exactly what happened on the post-test semantic differential survey on old people. Children in three of the four treatment groups lived in lower socioeconomic areas where the elderly (like all others there) experience typical problems that accompany life in such areas. It is these problems and the results they produce that the children became sensitive to and aware of. It was this new-found sensitivity and awareness that generated the post-test responses to the semantic differential survey on old people.

Attitudes, formed slowly over time, are affected by and evolve from exposure to factors that shape the attitudes. The children of our treatment groups then should continue to have their attitudes toward the elderly shaped by ongoing interaction with them, interaction stimulated by and made comfortable by the basic classroom experience of viewing the "Growing Up—Growing Older" film series and participating in the accompanying intergenerational dialogues.

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LEARNING RESOURCES

Edited by
Allen B. Moore

BOOK REVIEWS

NONTRADITIONAL THERAPY AND COUNSELING WITH THE AGING

Edited by S. S. Sargent
New York: Springer, 1980
Reviewed by Bert Hayslip Jr.
North Texas State University

Nontraditional Therapy and Counseling with the Aging, one of the volumes in the Springer series on adulthood and aging, deals with an emerging trend in the clinical and counseling psychology of aging, that of providing counseling or psychotherapeutic services to elderly persons who would otherwise not take advantage of such help offered within a "traditional" framework. In this sense, "nontraditional" services are those delivered in different settings (e.g., senior center), by different personnel (e.g., volunteers, peers), utilizing different techniques (e.g., pastoral counseling). Traditional therapy, on the other hand, is provided by a professional (psychiatrist, psychologist) within an in-patient framework, utilizing techniques that are basically individual (patient-therapist) in nature.

The text is divided into three sections: an initial set of readings dealing with nontraditional therapy in the setting of senior centers, a second section dealing with the use of volunteers and peer counselors, and a last set of chapters exploring diverse therapeutic approaches with the aged. Introductory and conclusive chapters for each section by the editor are extremely valuable and do an excellent job of setting the tone for the remainder of the book.

Because current epidemiological data suggests an underutilization of available counseling and psychotherapeutic services by elderly persons, this volume is certainly timely. It must be pointed out, however, that the unacceptability of such services to most elderly—that is, they do not ask for help for emotional problems—is an assumption the editor makes based on his own professional experience. Whether traditional services would be used more often if they were more accessible is an empirical question. The book gives many examples of apparently successful nontraditional programs, but does not prove that changes in traditional therapy would enhance its credibility with elderly persons. The book's focus on indirect, informalized helping efforts integrated into the natural, real-life world of the older person could lead one to believe that such nontraditional services might replace traditional therapy. Instead, nontraditional counseling might supplement, reinforce, or coexist with more formal, direct resources to offer as many alternatives as possible to elderly persons with emotional problems. Obviously, some approaches are going to be more acceptable to some than to others.

Each of the chapters is written in a clear, understandable style that should give the text a wide audience. A diverse number of approaches are discussed such as, assertiveness training, widows' groups, adult day care, pastoral care,